

Introduction to Academic Writing: Chapter 2
Narrative Paragraphs

Narration is story writing. When you write a narrative paragraph, you write about events in the order that they happen. In other words, you use **time order** to organize your sentences.

As you read the model paragraph, look for words and phrases that tell when something happened.

Earthquake!

An unforgettable experience in my life was a magnitude 6.9 earthquake. I was at home with my older sister and younger brother. Suddenly, our apartment started shaking. At first, none of us realized what was happening. Then my sister yelled, "Earthquake! Get under something!" I half rolled and half crawled across the room to get under the dining table. My sister also yelled at my little brother to get under his desk. Meanwhile, my sister was on the kitchen floor holding her arms over her head to protect it from falling dishes. The earthquake lasted less than a minute, but it seemed like a year to us. At last, the shaking stopped. For a minute or two, we were too scared to move. Then we tried to call our parents at work, but even our cell phone didn't work. Next, we checked the apartment for damage. We felt very lucky, for nothing was broken except a few dishes. However, our first earthquake was an experience that none of us will ever forget.

(172 words)

Questions on the Model

1. In which four sentences does the word earthquake appear?
2. What words and phrases show when different actions took place? Circle them.

Words	Phrases
Finally,	At last,
First (second, third, etc.),	At 12:00,
Later,	After a while,
Meanwhile,	After that,
Next,	Before beginning the lesson,
Now	In the morning,
Soon	The next day,
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Put a comma after a time order signal that comes before the subject at the beginning of a sentence. (Exception: *Then*, *soon*, and *now* are usually not followed by a comma.)

- At first, none of us realized what was happening.
- For a minute or two, we were too scared to move.
- Then we tried to call our parents at work.
-

Put the following sentences in the correct order.

1. _____ She put the clean dishes away.
- _____ 2 _____ She removed the dirty dishes from the table.
- _____ She turned on the dishwasher.
- _____ She put them in the dishwasher.
- _____ She piled them in the sink and rinsed them.
- _____ 1 _____ It was Sarah's turn to wash the dishes last night.
- _____ Finally, the dishes were clean.

Omusubi Kororin (The Tumbling Rice Balls) A Folktale from Japan

Once upon a time, an old couple lived in the countryside. They were happy, but they were poor. One day, the old man went to work in the forest and took his usual lunch of three rice balls. During lunch, he dropped a rice ball, and it rolled into a hole in the ground. He heard happy singing coming from the hole, so he dropped the other two rice balls into it. Inside the hole, some mice were having a party. They thanked him for the rice balls and invited him to join them. After a while, the mice told him to choose a box as a reward for his generosity. He could choose a big box, or he could choose a small one. He thought about taking a big box, but he finally chose a small one. Back at home, he and his wife discovered that the box was full of gold coins. A greedy neighbor heard about their good fortune and quickly made plans to visit the same hole. At the hole, he pushed several rice balls into it, and sure enough, the mice invited him in. The greedy man wanted all of the mice's gold, so he pretended to be a cat. He started meowing loudly, and the frightened mice ran away. The gold disappeared with the mice, so the greedy man got nothing, not even a rice ball.

(232 words)

HOMEWORK

Choose one of the following and write a paragraph. In your paragraph, focus on writing **compound sentences**. Try to use the coordinating conjunctions **and**, **but**, **so**, and **or** at least one time each.

- Retell a short folktale from your culture.
- Retell a children's story that you know.
- Retell the plot of a movie that you have seen recently.

Grammar: Subject-verb Agreement:

Some words are always singular.

- One (of my brothers) **is** a musician.
- Neither (of my parents) **is** living.
- Much (of my time) **is** spent in the library.
- Each (of my brothers) **wants** his own car.
- Either (of my sisters) **is** able to baby-sit for you tonight.
- Nothing ever **happens** in my life.
- Is anyone home?

A few words are always plural.

- Both (of my parents) **are** teachers.
- Several (of the teachers) **speak** my language.
- Many (of my friends) **work** in the library.

A few words can be either singular or plural. In these cases, you must refer to the noun in the prepositional phrase.

- Some (of the money) **was** missing. (singular)
- Some (of the students) **were** missing. (plural)
- All (of my time) **is** spent in the library. (singular)
- All (of my brothers) **are** singers. (plural)
- Most (of the ice) **was** melted. (singular)
- Most (of the ice cubes) **were** melted. (plural)
- A lot (of the work) **was** too easy. (singular)
- A lot (of the people) **were** angry. (plural)
- None (of the fruit) **is** fresh. (singular)
- None (of the apples) **are** fresh. (plural)

Scoring Rubric: Paragraphs

	Maximum Score	Actual Score
Format—5 points		
There is a title.	1	_____
The title is centered.	1	_____
The first line is indented.	1	_____
There are margins on both sides.	1	_____
The paragraph is double-spaced.	1	_____
Total	5	
Punctuation and Mechanics—5 points		
There is a period after every sentence.	1	_____
Capital letters are used correctly.	1	_____
The spelling is correct.	1	_____
Commas are used correctly.	2	_____
Total	5	
Content—20 points		
The paragraph fits the assignment.	5	_____
The paragraph is interesting to read.	5	_____
The paragraph shows that the writer used care and thought.	10	_____
Total	20	
Organization—35 points		
The paragraph begins with a topic sentence that has both a topic and a controlling idea.	10	_____
The paragraph contains several specific and factual supporting sentences that explain or prove the topic sentence, including at least one example.	20	_____
The paragraph ends with an appropriate concluding sentence.	5	_____
Total	35	
Grammar and Sentence Structure—35 points		
Estimate a grammar and sentence structure score.	35	
Grand Total	100	